INAUGURAL ADDRESSES

OF

FOUR PRESIDENTS

OF

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

H. S. OLCOTT, ANNIE BESANT

GEORGE S. ARUNDALE, C. JINARÂJADÂSA

Rs. 2-4

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

Adyar, Madras, India

1946

PROPERTY OF THE
NATIONAL
LIBRARY
of the
THEOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY
in America
OLCOTT . WHEATON . ILLINOIS

INAUGURAL ADDRESSES

INAUGURAL ADDRESSES

OF

FOUR PRESIDENTS

OF

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

H. S. OLCOTT, ANNIE BESANT

GEORGE S. ARUNDALE, C. JINARĀJADĀSA

3178

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA

1946

Sold by
The Theosophical Press
Wheaton, Illinois

Th
Ol.1.o
20560

Printed by C. Subbarayudu, at the Vasanta Press,
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras.
P.I.C. No. 85—24-12-46

CONTENTS

PAGE

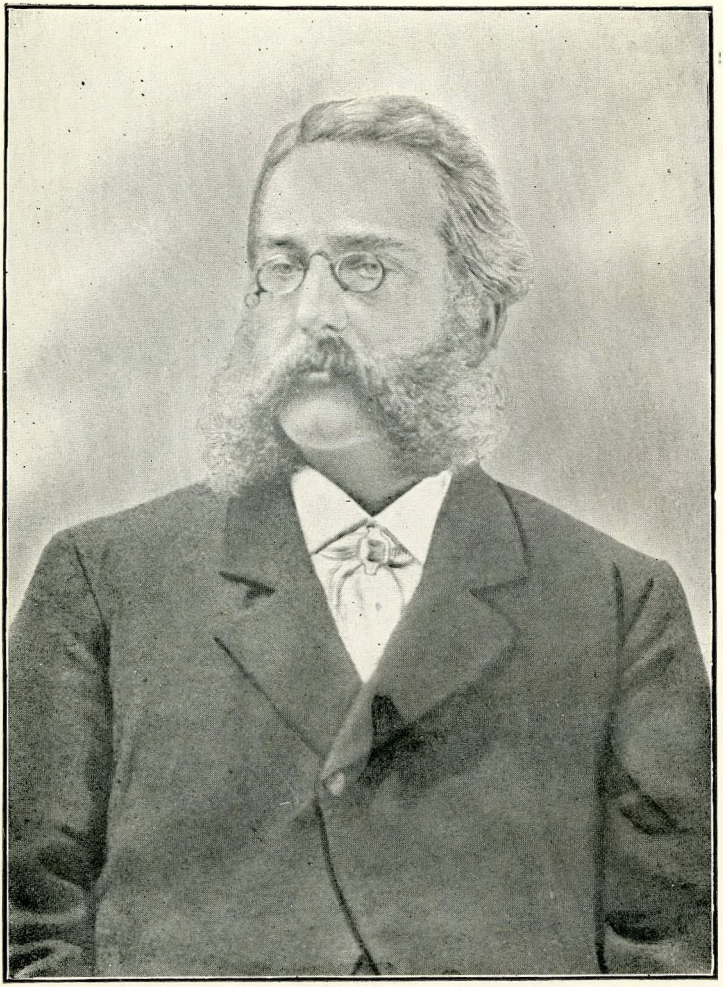
INAUGURAL ADDRESSES OF:

H. S. Olcott 1

Annie Besant 27

G. S. Arundale 37

C. Jinarājadāsa 57



H. S. OLCOTT

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF H. S. OLCOTT, PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY[1]

November 17, 1875

In future times, when the impartial historian shall write an account of the progress of religious ideas in the present century, the formation of this Theosophical Society, whose first meeting under its formal declaration of principles we are now attending, will not pass unnoticed. This much is certain. The bare announcement of the intended inauguration of such a movement attracted attention, and caused no little discussion in the secular as well as the religious press. It has sounded in the ears of some of the leaders of the contending forces of theology and science, like the distant blast of a trumpet to the struggling

[1] Delivered at Mott Memorial Hall, in the City of New York, at the first regular meeting of the Society.

armies in a battle. The note is faint as yet, and indicates neither the strength nor purposes of the body approaching. For either side, it may mean a reinforcement that will help turn the tide of victory; it may herald only the gathering of neutrals to watch events; or it may threaten the discomfiture and disarmament of both antagonists.

From what little has been said in its behalf, it is not yet clear to the public how this "new departure" should be regarded. Neither Church nor college knows whether to adopt a policy of denunciation, misrepresentation, contumely, or amity. By some secular journals it is patronizingly encouraged as likely to "enliven a prosaic age with exhibitions of mediæval tricks of sorcery", while others denounce it as the forerunner of a relapse into "the worst forms of fetishism". The Spiritualists began, a few weeks ago, with voluminous and angry protests against its promoters, as seeking to supplant the prevalent democratic relations with the other world by an aristocratic esotericism, and even now, while they seem to be watching our next move with the greatest interest, their press teems with

defamatory criticisms. Neither of the religious sects has definitely committed itself, although our preliminary advances have been noticed in a guarded way in some of their organs.

Such being the state of the case at the very onset of our movement, before one blow has been struck, am I not warranted in repeating the statement that in the coming time it is inevitable that the birth of this Society of ours must be considered as a factor in the problem which the historian will be required to solve?

The present small number of its members is not to be considered at all in judging of its probable career. Eighteen hundred and seventy odd years ago, the whole Christian Church could be contained within a Galilean fisherman's hut, and yet it now embraces one hundred and twenty millions of people within its communion; and twelve centuries ago, the only believer in Islāmism, which now counts two hundred and fifty million devotees, bestrode a camel and dreamed dreams.

No, it is not a question of numbers how great an effect this Society will have upon religious thought—I will go further, and say, upon the science and philosophy—of the age:

great events sometimes come from far more modest beginnings. I need not occupy time in quoting examples which will occur to every one of you in corroboration of my point. Nor is it a question of endowment funds and income any more than one of numerous members: the propagandist disciples sent out by Jesus went barefoot, ill-clothed, and without purse or scrip.

What is it then, which makes me say what in deepest seriousness and a full knowledge of its truth I have said? What is it that makes me not only content but proud to stand for the brief moment as the mouthpiece and figure-head of this movement, risking abuse, misrepresentation, and every vile assault? It is the fact that in my soul I feel that behind us, behind our little band, behind our feeble, new-born organization, there gathers a MIGHTY POWER that nothing can withstand—the power of TRUTH! Because I feel that we are only the advance-guard, holding the pass until the main body shall come up. Because I feel that we are enlisted in a holy cause, and that truth, now as always, is mighty and will prevail. Because I see around us a multitude of people

of many different creeds worshipping, through sheer ignorance, shams and effete superstitions, and who are only waiting to be shown the audacity and dishonesty of their spiritual guides to call them to account, and begin to think for themselves. Because I feel, as a sincere Theosophist, that we shall be able to give to science such evidences of the truth of the ancient philosophy and the comprehensiveness of ancient science, that her drift towards atheism will be arrested, and our chemists will, as Madame Blavatsky expresses it, "set to work to learn a new alphabet of Science on the lap of Mother Nature".

As a believer in Theosophy, theoretical and practical, I personally am confident that this Society will be the means of furnishing such unanswerable proofs of the immortality of the soul, that none but fools will doubt. I believe that the time will come when men will be as ashamed of ever having advocated atheism in any of its forms, as, thirty years hence, they will be of ever having owned a slave or countenanced human slavery.

Look back the few, the very few, years to the time when William Lloyd Garrison was led

through Boston streets with a rope around his neck. Compare that with the present state of the Slavery Question, and then tell me what may *not* a few earnest, determined, unselfish persons do. Why, in 1859, I myself went, at the risk of my life, to report for the New York *Tribune* the hanging of John Brown; and in 1857, while I was visiting Senator Hammond, of South Carolina, solely in my character of a student of scientific agriculture, and having nothing whatever to do with politics, an Augusta paper advised my commission to jail because I wrote for the *Tribune*, although only upon agriculture. Having passed through such experiences, and seen so complete a reversal of conditions within the space of less than a score of years, I feel that neither I nor this Society incurs any great danger by displaying a little moral courage in so good a cause. Let the future take care of itself; it is for us to so shape the present as to make it beget what we desire and what will bring honour upon us. If we are true to each other and true to ourselves, we shall surmount every obstacle, vanquish every foe, and attain what we are all in search of, the peace of mind

which comes of absolute knowledge. If we are divided, irresolute, temporizing, jesuitical, we shall fail as a Society to do what is now clearly within our reach ; and future years will doubtless see us bewailing the loss of such a golden opportunity as comes to few persons in a succession of centuries.

But if this Society were to dissolve within one year, we should not have lived in vain. To-day is our own ; to-morrow may be ; but yesterday is gone for ever. In the economy of nature, an impulse, however slight, once given to matter, is eternal ; and an act once performed, its consequences, be they great or small, must be worked out sooner or later. The passing caprice of a woman has changed the destiny of nations ; the speaking of a word in the mountains may bring a crushing avalanche upon the hamlet that lies at their feet ; the turning of a man's footsteps to the right or left, to avoid a stone, or chase a butterfly, or gratify it matters not what idle whim, may alter his whole life, and, directly or indirectly, result in momentous consequences to a world.

About us we see the people struggling blindly to emancipate their thought from

ecclesiastical despotism—without seeing more than a faint glimmer of light in the whole black horizon of their religious ideas. They struggle from an irrepressible desire to be free from shackles which bind their limping reason after their volant intuitions have outgrown them. Upon the one side, the philosophical chemists invite them to an apotheosis of matter; upon the other, the Spiritualists fling open the painted doors of their "angel world". The clergy hold them back and hiss warnings and anathemas in their ears. They waver, uncertain which way to go. Heirs to the spiritual longings of the race, they shrink back from the prospect of annihilation, which, in their own case, when life's burden presses heavily, may not always seem unwelcome, but which was never meant for those near and dear ones who have died in their youth and purity, and left behind a sweet fragrance when the alabaster box was broken and they passed behind the Veil of Isis.

But when they turn to Spiritualism for comfort and conviction, they encounter such a barrier of imposture, tricky mediums, lying spirits, and revolting social theories, that they

recoil with loathing; secretly lamenting the necessity which compels them to do it. They count among their acquaintance, perhaps, many persons of irreproachable character who can testify to the identification of departed friends and count themselves Spiritualists; but they see these very friends attending their churches as before, abstaining from Spiritualist meetings, and taking the Spiritualist papers secretly. When they ask why this is so, the universal reply is that so many immoral people have fastened upon the cause, and mediums are being so constantly detected in trickery, that it is almost disreputable to be an open and avowed Spiritualist. The organs of the class apologize for cheating mediums, demanding that sceptics shall overlook the nine instances of fraud and consider the one genuine phenomenon; forgetting that it requires blunt nerves and a strong purpose to dig to the bottom of a muck-heap for the chance of finding something of value there.

The Protestant sects begin with the fatal assumption that an infallible and inspired Bible will bear the test of reason, and so forecast their own doom; for the analytical

power of reason is bounded only by the limits of ascertained truth, and fresh discoveries are daily made among the remains of antiquity, which attack the very foundations upon which the whole scheme of Christianity is based. The most audacious explorers in science are recruits from Protestantism; that would-be mistress of our conscience is stabbed by her own children. The Catholic Church having erected a theocracy upon the ruins of ancient faiths, and stolen not only their allegories but their very exoteric symbolism and revamped them for her own use, is gathering her forces for the struggle that she knows too well is close at hand, and that will be mortal. Enraged at the progress of the age, which has extinguished her penal fires, destroyed her torture-chambers, blunted her axe, and made it impossible for her to re-bathe her hands in human blood, she is working silently, cunningly, and with intense eagerness to regain her lost supremacy. What this under-current is we may see in the disgraceful Orange Riot of 1872; the recent conviction of poor Leymarie, in Paris; and the affair of Guibord, in Montreal, whose body has just been buried in a ton

of Portland cement and under the escort of thirteen hundred armed police, infantry, and artillery, to protect it from the rage of the Catholics, because Guibord belonged to a society which admitted liberal books into its library! We may also see the secret machinations of the Church in the perversions to its communion; the establishment of schools, colleges, convents, monasteries; the schemes to romanize a portion of our common schools; the building of costly cathedrals; and the erection of parishes into bishoprics, and bishoprics into archiepiscopal sees.

Upon what does this Church or any other ecclesiastical hierarchy stand, but upon the congenital longing of man for an immortal existence; the obscurity of our view of the other world by reason of intervening matter; and the urgency of material wants, which oblige us to accept the intervention of a select class of spiritual guides and expounders, or go without spiritual nourishment other than such as we can pick up beside the dusty road along which we trudge from youth to old age?

If the founders of the Society are true to themselves, they will set to work to study the

religious question from the standpoint of the ancient peoples, gather together their wisdom, verify their alleged Theosophic discoveries (I say *alleged*, as president of a non-committal society of investigation; as an individual, I should omit that word, and give full credit where it is due) and contribute to the common fund whatever is of common interest. If there be any who have begun without counting the cost; if there be any who think to pervert this body to sectarian or any other narrow, selfish ends; if there be any cowards, who wish to meet with us in secret and revile us in public; if there be any who begin with the hope or expectation of making everything bend to their preconceived notions, regardless of the evidence; if there be any who, in subscribing to the broad and manly principle enunciated in the by-laws, that we will discover all we can about *all* the laws of nature, do so with a mental reservation that they will back out if any pet theory, or creed, or interest is endangered; if there be any such, I pray them, in all kindness, to withdraw now, when they can do so without hard words or hard feelings. For, if I understand the spirit of this Society,

it consecrates itself to the intrepid and conscientious study of truth, and binds itself, individually as collectively, to suffer *nothing* to stand in the way. As for me—poor, weak man, honoured far beyond my deserts in my election to this place of honor and of danger—I can only say that, come well, come ill, my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength are pledged to this cause, and I shall stand fast while I have a breath of life in me, though all others shall retire and leave me to stand alone. But I shall not be alone, nor will the Theosophical Society be alone. Even now branch societies are projected in this country. Our organization has been noticed in England, and I am told that an article upon the subject is about to appear in one of the greatest of the quarterlies. Whether it shall be couched in friendly or hostile spirit matters little; our protest and challenge will be announced, and we may safely leave the rest to the natural order of events.

If I rightly apprehend our work, it is to aid in freeing the public mind of theological superstition and a tame subservience to the arrogance of science. However much or little

we may do, I think it would have been hardly possible to hope for anything if the work had been begun in any country which did not afford perfect political and religious liberty. It certainly would have been useless to attempt it except in one where all religions stand alike before the law, and where religious heterodoxy works no abridgment of civil rights.

Our Society is, I may say, without precedent. From the days when the Neoplatonists and the last theurgists of Alexandria were scattered by the murderous hand of Christianity, until now, the revival of a study of Theosophy has not been attempted.

There have been secret political, commercial, and industrial societies, and societies of Freemasons and their offshoots, but, even in secrecy, they have not attempted to perform the labour which lies before us and which we will do openly.

To the Protestant and Catholic sectaries we have to show the pagan origin of many of their most sacred idols and most cherished dogmas; to the liberal minds in science, the profound scientific attainments of the ancient magi. Society has reached a point where *something*

must be done; it is for us to indicate where that something may be found.

If we would compare our organization with its archetype, where can it be found? It cannot be called theurgic, for the theurgists not only believed in God, but knew Him through their knowledge of His attributes as they exist in the Astral Light, or, as the old world Kabbalists called it, the Matrix of the World. The theurgists had two kinds of mysteries—the *exoteric*, or public, and *esoteric*, or secret. The exoteric comprised the working of wonderful effects at public ceremonies—among others the causing of statues to walk, talk, and prophesy. These effects were said to have been produced by natural forces in combination with the elementary spirits which lurk in the astral light. As the practice of even exoteric theurgy is dangerous it was left to the High Priests and the "Initiates of the Outer Temple". But the real esoteric mysteries were chiefly confined to the hierophants. A life of the strictest purity and self-abnegation was required for it—a life such as that of Jesus or Apollonius. Certainly the Theosophical Society cannot be compared to an

ancient school of theurgy, for scarely one of its members yet suspects that the obtaining of occult knowledge requires any more sacrifices than any other branch of knowledge.

The Neoplatonists formed a school of philosophy which arose in Alexandria coincidently with Christianity, and was the last public school of theurgy. It based its psychological system upon those of Pythagoras and Plato, but drew a great deal more from the primeval source of all religions, the books of Hermes and the Vedas—of Egypt and India respectively. The Jewish Kabbala colored Neoplatonism no little, for real theurgy having degenerated at that time, and the few remaining adepts having sought solitude with the Essenes and in India, the Neoplatonists had no longer access to the real treatises upon the Divine Science, (which were carefully collected and withdrawn to a secret place a few days before the burning of the Alexandrian library by Julius Cæsar), and so they had to fall back upon the Kabbala of Moses and the Seventy. Neoplatonism was tinctured with both Orientalism and Occidentalism; and its expounders tried to present the elements of Theosophy and

philosophy according to the primitive doctrines of the Oriental prophets, in combination with poetical Platonism and the positivism of Aristotle in the form of Grecian dialectics. Their proper doctrines were : the Oriental doctrine of Emanation ; the Pythagorean Number of Harmony ; Plato's ideas of the creation and the separation from the world of sense.[1]

They believed in elementary spirits, whom they evoked and controlled—a point of especial interest to us.

We cannot, of course, include ourselves among the number of American Spiritualists who implicitly accept all the genuine phenomena to be produced by disembodied spirits ; for while some of us unreservedly believe in the occasional return of human spirits and in the existence of true mediums, others discredit both. Moreover, of the believers, some not only admit the possibility of occult forces of nature being directed, consciously or unconsciously, by the human will for the production of startling results, but also recognize in most of the physical phenomena called spiritual, the agency of elementary spirits who often falsely

[1] See Ennemoser's *History of Magic*.

personate persons not communing with the circles, answer the thoughts which lie visible to them

> . . . as clear
> As pebbles within brooks appear,

and echo and respond to every fanciful vagary which agitates the questioner's mind.

Spiritualism proper was rife at Rome in the time of Ammianus Marcellinus, who tells us that in the days of the Emperor Valens (A.D. 371) some Greeks wishing to form a society of theurgists, were brought to trial for attempting to ascertain, through magical arts, who should succeed to the throne. They employed a small table shaped like a tripod, which was produced in court, and upon being put to the torture they confessed as follows: "We constructed this table of laurel-wood under solemn auspices. Having duly consecrated it, by pronouncing over it prayers as ordered in the treatises which we stole from a Grand Priest at Delphi, and by the use of magnetic manipulations, we succeeded in making it deliver oracles." Over the table hung suspended from the ceiling a large bronze ring, which swung hither and thither, and, striking

the letters cut in the periphery of the table-top, gave lengthy communications. Valens hated Theodorus, a man of virtue, and as the swinging ring spelt out the letters T-h-e-o-d and stopped, the Emperor, to make sure that the object of his displeasure should not occupy the throne, had him put to death: but the murder proved a useless precaution, for *Theodosius* succeeded to the purple, and the prognostication of the table turned out correct.

There is the difference between the modern spiritualistic phenomena and effects produced by the theurgists, that whereas no reliance can apparently be placed upon the spontaneous communications of the former without corroboration, the latter cannot be untruthful, since the adepts will not permit unprogressed spirits to approach or speak.

The mesmeric phenomena, which will of necessity invite us to careful study, were known in the most remote periods, and are described by Seneca, Martial, Plautus, and Pausanias.

We are not representatives of the school of the Stoics, for "they thought the Universe to be made of matter, and to be some great animal which lives because there is nothing to

interfere with it".[1] Moreover, Zeno's pupils taught not only that men should be free from passion and unmoved by joy or grief but also that they should submit to the unavoidable necessity by which all things are governed; and we found this Society in token of our discontent with things as they are and to endeavor to bring about something better.

Finally, we do not resemble the atomical atheists, who considered everything a congeries of atoms, because matter can be separated into particles, and that, therefore, there could be no indivisible incorporeal being, while the very title of our Society indicates that we hope to obtain knowledge of the existence of a Supreme Intelligence and of a world of spirits, by the help of physical processes.

No, we are neither of these, but simply investigators, of earnest purpose and unbiassed mind, who study all things, prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good.

Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and the Neoplatonists, all worked at theurgy separately, and at their meetings imparted to each other the results of their study and experiment.

[1] See Howitt's *History of the Supernatural*.

Their neophytes were obliged to follow this rule with strictness; and all were bound to protect and aid every philosopher, especially every theurgist, no matter whence he came or what school he represented.

The hermetists of the Middle Ages were all Neoplatonists, and learned their doctrines from them. In some respects we resemble them, and yet they had dogmas to impart, which under our by-laws we have not; and, further, they were all believers in Theosophy, while we are, with two or three exceptions, simply investigators, undertaking a task far more difficult than theirs, since we have no ready-made material for belief at our hand, but must create it for ourselves.

We are of our age, and yet some strides ahead of it, albeit some journals and pamphleteers more glib than truthful, have already charged us with being reactionists who turn from modern light (!) to mediæval and ancient darkness! We seek, inquire, reject nothing without cause, accept nothing without proof: we are students, not teachers.

We should make ourselves familiar with the manifold powers of the human soul and test

the claims for the potency of the human will. Mesmerism, Spiritualism, Od, the astral light of the ancients (now called the universal ether) and its currents—all these offer us the widest and most fascinating fields of exploration. At our semi-monthly meetings, we shall have the researches and experiments of our members and of eminent correspondents in this and other countries read for our instruction, and we shall have tests, experiments, and practical demonstrations, as occasion offers. As our funds warrant, we shall print and circulate our documents, and translate, reprint, and publish works by the great masters of Theosophy of all times.

But until our now somewhat incongruous elements are harmonized, and a common interest results from increased familiarity with our subject, I do not anticipate that at our general meetings we shall witness such theurgic phenomena as were exhibited in the ancient temples.

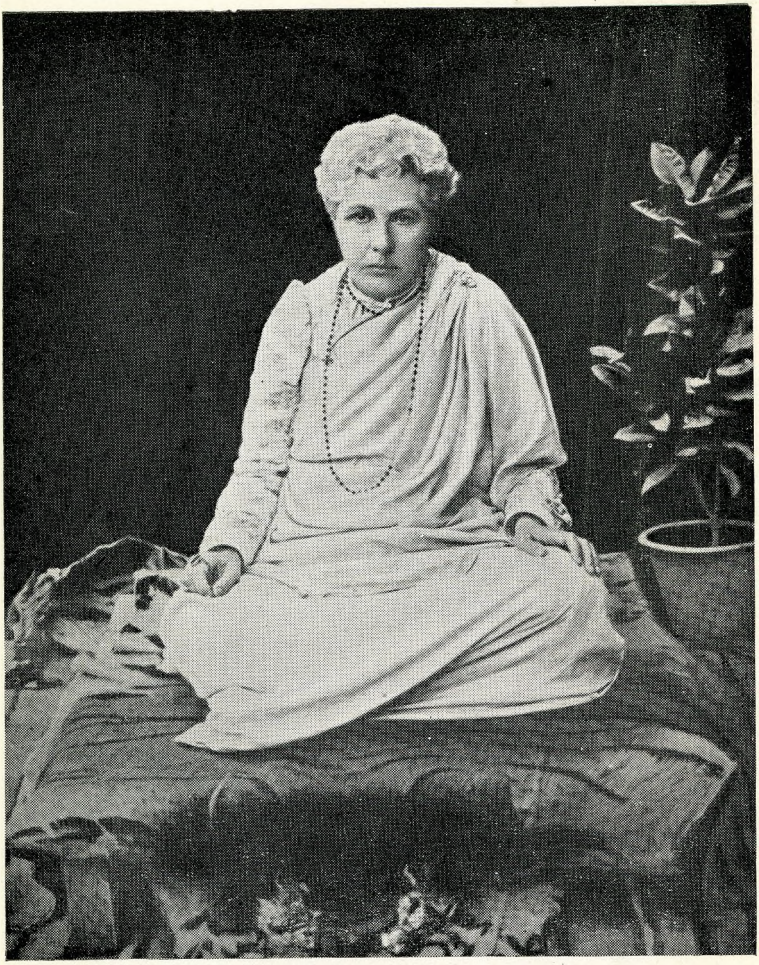
It is as impossible for these results to be obtained without perfect community of thought, will, and desire, as it was for Jesus to work his wonders at Nazareth because of the prevalent

unbelief, or Paul his at Athens where the populace knew how to check the subtle currents which he controlled by his will. A single very positive and unfriendly will is competent when introduced at a spiritual circle to utterly destroy the mediumistic power. If Professor Tyndall had known this law, he would not have written his nonsense to the Dialectical Society. Professor Stainton-Moses, of the University College, London, writes me that the mere entrance of such a person into the house—not even the room—has done this in his experience frequently. Mr. Crookes says that Florence Cook, his medium, has been spoiled for a season by a walk down Regent Street; each person who brushed against her depriving her of some portion of her mediumistic power. If she be in fact a medium and not an impostor, I do not doubt the possibility of this being the case. Every one who has studied mesmerism is aware that no satisfactory results can be attained without perfect accord among those engaged in the experiment or standing near by as spectators. These things being so, how can we expect that *as a society* we can have any very remarkable illustrations

of the control of the adept theurgist over the subtle powers of nature?

But here is where Mr. Felt's alleged discoveries will come into play. Without claiming to be a theurgist, a mesmerist, or a Spiritualist, our Vice-President promises, by simple chemical appliances, to exhibit to us, as he has to others before, the races of beings which, invisible to our eyes, people the elements. Think for a moment of this astounding claim! Fancy the consequences of the practical demonstration of its truth, for which Mr. Felt is now preparing the requisite apparatus! What will the Church say of a whole world of beings within her territory but without her jurisdiction? What will the academy say of this crushing proof of an unseen Universe given by the most unimaginative of its sciences? What will the Positivists say, who have been prating of the impossibility of there being any entity which cannot be weighed in scales, filtered through funnels, tested with litmus, or carved with a scalpel? What will the Spiritualists say, when through the column of saturated vapor flit the dreadful shapes of beings whom, in their blindness, they have in a

thousand cases revered and babbled to as the returning shades of their relatives and friends? Alas! poor Spiritualists—editors and correspondents—who have made themselves jocund over my impudence and apostasy. Alas, sleek scientists, overswollen with the wind of popular applause! The day of reckoning is close at hand, and the name of the Theosophical Society will, if Mr. Felt's experiments result favorably, hold its place in history as that of the body which first exhibited the "Elementary Spirits" in this nineteenth century of conceit and infidelity, even if it be never mentioned for any other reason.



DR. ANNIE BESANT

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF ANNIE BESANT TO THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ITS OFFICERS AND MEMBERS:

(London, 26th June, 1907)

DEAR FRIENDS:

By an overwhelming majority you have ratified the nomination of our President-Founder, made by his Master's order, and have called upon me to take up work as his successor in the high office of President of the Theosophical Society. The Society, as a whole, has thus chosen to continue in the path marked out from its inception, and trodden by its two outer Founders; it has refused to reject the guiding Hand which gave it its first President, and indicated its second; it therefore goes forward on its new cycle of activity, with its elected President at its head, under the benediction which rested upon it at

its birth and is now repeated, as the chosen vehicle for the direct influence of the Masters of WISDOM on the world, as the standard-bearer of the mighty Theosophical Movement which is sweeping through all religions, all literature, all art, all craft, through all the activities of a humanity preparing itself to take a new step forward in civilization.

The Society asserts itself as a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, and its speciality, as such a nucleus, is indicated by its name—Theosophical. It is its function to proclaim and spread abroad Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, the Brahma Vidyā, the Gnosis, the Light of all lights, that Man may know God, may attain the knowledge which is Eternal Life, because he is himself of that Nature which he seeks to know.

On this fact, this all-pervading identity of nature, this UNITY, is based the Universal Brotherhood, and, to bring the outer proofs of it, it searches through all religions and philosophies, and dives into the hidden secrets of nature and of man.

Because of this fact, it welcomes to its membership men and women of all religions,

of all opinions, and, provided that they recognize the Brotherhood as universal, it demands from them no belief in any fact, however sure, in any teaching, however vital. With a splendid faith in the victorious power of Truth, it disregards all the barriers which superficially divide Humanity—sex, race, creed, colour, caste—and welcomes those as brothers who deny even the very truths on which Brotherhood is based, and who reject even the Revealers who make its realization possible for Humanity. Its platform is as wide as thought, its all-embracing love is as the sun which gives warmth and life to all, even to those who are blind to its light.

The condition of the continuing life of the Society is its perfect toleration of all differences, of all shades of opinion. None has the right to exclude his brother for difference of thought, nor to claim for his own thought a fuller liberty of expression than he claims for that of another. Complete liberty of thought must be guarded by all of us—by me, as your President, most of all—not granted as a privilege or a concession, but recognized as the inherent right of the intellect, as its breath of

20560

life. Tolerance, even with the intolerant, must be our rule. And this must be our principle in life and action, not only in words, lest a fatal orthodoxy, checking new initiative and new growth, should stealthily spread in the Society. We must welcome differences of thought, and give free play to their expression, so that our windows may be kept open to all new light. This is not only sound principle, but it is also sound policy, for thus only can new avenues to knowledge constantly open before us. We possess only portions of the Truth, and no searcher must be hindered or frowned upon, lest the Society should lose some fragment that he may have found. Better the temporary life of a thousand falsehoods, than stifling of one truth at the hour of its birth. I claim the help of every Theosophist in this guarding of our liberty, for universal and constant vigilance is necessary lest it should be infringed.

But let it not be supposed that this perfect freedom of opinion connotes indifference to truth in any who hold definite convictions as to any facts, or should prevent them from full expression of their own convictions, of their

beliefs, or of their knowledge. There is perfect freedom of affirmation among us as well as of denial, and scepticism must not claim greater rights of expression than knowledge. For the Society as a whole, by its very name, affirms the existence of the Divine Wisdom, and the affirmation would be futile if that Wisdom were beyond human attainment. Moreover, the Society would be without a reason for its being if it did not, as a whole, spread the Teachings which lead up to the attainment of that Wisdom, while leaving to its members as individuals the fullest freedom to give to any of those teachings any form which expresses their own thinking, and even to deny any one of them. Each Truth can only be seen by a man as he develops the power of vision corresponding to it; the Society, by refusing to impose on its members any expressions of Truth, does not mean that a man should remain blind, but declares that man's power of vision increases in the open air of freedom better than in the hot-houses of unreasoned beliefs. Hence the Society does not impose on its members even the truths by which it lives, although the denial of

those truths by it, as a Society, would be suicide.

The Theosophical Society thus offers to the thinkers of every religion and of none a common platform, on which they may meet as Lovers of Truth, to learn from and to teach each other; it stands as the herald of the coming time when all religions shall see themselves as branches of One Religion, the WISDOM of GOD. As its President, I say to all men of peace and goodwill: "Come, and let us labour together for the establishment of the kingdom of religious Truth, religious Peace, and religious Freedom upon earth—the true Kingdom of Heaven."

So much for our principles. What of our practice?

We owe to the President-Founder a well-planned organization, combining complete divisional liberty with the strength ensured by attachment to a single centre. Some details may need amendment, but the work of organization is practically complete. Our work is to use the organization he created, and to guide it to the accomplishment of its purpose—the spread of Theosophical ideas, and the growth of our knowledge.

For the first, our Lodges should not be content with a programme of lectures, private and public, and with classes. The members should be known as good workers in all branches of beneficent activity. The Lodge should be the centre, not the circumference, of our work. To the Lodge for inspiration and knowledge; to the world for service and teaching. The members should take part in local clubs, societies, and debating associations, and should both offer Theosophical lectures, and lectures in which Theosophical ideas can be put forth on the questions of the day. They should, when members of religious bodies, hold classes outside the Society for members of their faith, in which the spiritual, instead of the literal meaning of Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and other doctrines should be explained, and the lives of the great mystics of all religions should be taught. They should see that children receive religious education, according to their respective faiths. They should in every way hand on the light which they have received, and replenish their own torch with oil at the Lodge meetings. People belonging to kindred movements should be

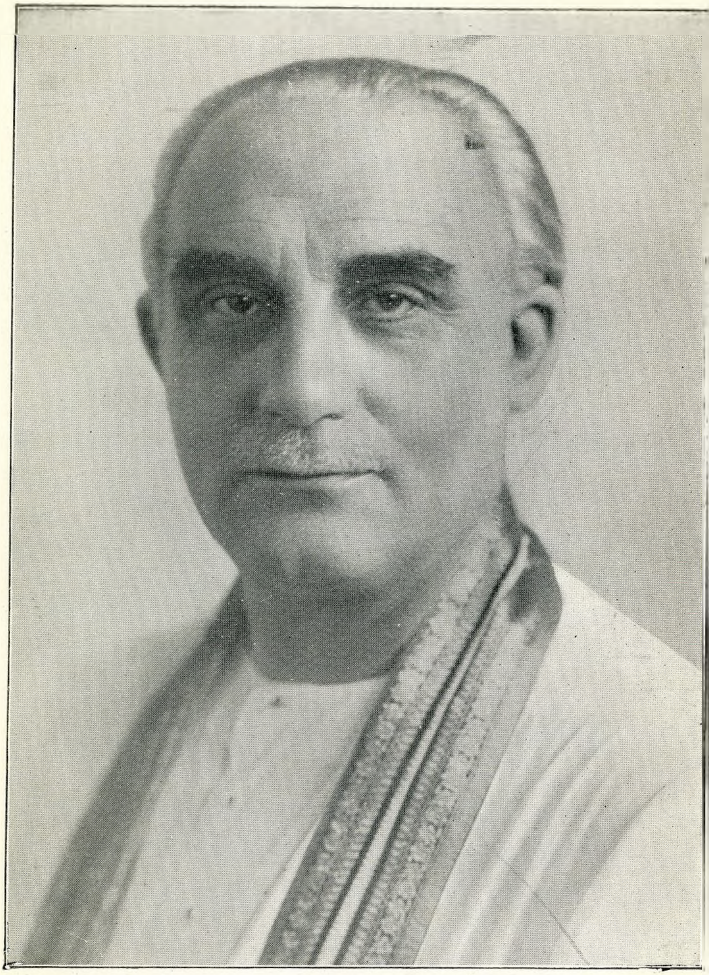
invited to the Lodge, and visits should be paid to them in turn. Lodges with a numerous membership should form groups for special work. For the second, the growth of our knowledge, groups should be formed for study under each of our Objects. Under the first, the intellectual and social movements of the day should be studied, their tendencies traced out and their methods examined; the results of these studies would help the outside workers in their choice of activities. It would be useful also if, in every Lodge, a small group of members were formed, harmonious in thought and feeling, who should meet once a week for a quiet hour, for combined silent thought for a given purpose, and for united meditation on some inspiring idea; the members of this group might also agree on a time at which, daily, they should unite in a selected thought-effort to aid the Lodge. Another group should study under the second Object, and this group should supply lecturers on Theosophy to the outer world, and no lecturer should be sent out by a Lodge who was not equipped for his work by such study. A third group might take up the third Object

of the Society, and work practically at research, carrying on their work, if possible, under the direction of a member who has already some experience on these lines, and thus increasing our store of knowledge.

There are many other lines of useful work which should be taken up, series of books to be planned, concerted activities in various lands. These are for the future. But I trust to make the Presidency a centre of life-radiating force, inspiring and uplifting the whole Society.

In order that it may be so, let me close with a final word to all who have aided and to all who have worked against me in the election now over. We all are lovers of the same Ideal, and eager servants of Theosophy. Let us all then work in amity, along our different lines and in our different ways, for our beloved Society. Let not those who have worked for me expect me to be always right, nor those who have worked against me expect me to be always wrong. Help me, I pray you all, in filling well the office to which I have been elected, and share with me the burden of our common work. Where you agree with me

follow and work with me; where you disagree, criticize and work against me, but without bitterness and rancour. Diversities of method, diversities of thought, diversities of operation, will enrich, not weaken, our Movement, if love inspire and charity judge. Only through you and with you can the Presidency be useful to the Society. Help me so to fill it as to hand it on, a richer legacy, to my successor. And so may the Masters guide and prosper the work which they have given into my hands, and blessed.



G. S. ARUNDALE

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF G. S. ARUNDALE, PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

June 21, 1934

I

By electing me to succeed my beloved and revered teacher, Dr. Besant, in the office of President of the Theosophical Society, you have not only conferred upon me the greatest honour in your power to bestow, but also the greatest honour I could ever wish to possess. I regard your selection of myself for the seven years' term of office less as a mark of confidence and more as the gesture of an earnest expectation that I will steadfastly follow in the footsteps of those great brethren who have preceded me in office.

I have, of course, yet to show that you have chosen wisely, and to justify your hope that my close association with our great leaders

during the past forty years will enable me in some degree to perpetuate their spirit and to reflect their policies. All I can say is that I will do my best.

You will, however, I am sure, agree that I am assuming office in one of our Society's most difficult periods. Within less than six months we have lost the two Theosophists who within recent decades have contributed most brilliantly to the growth of the Society and to our understanding of Theosophy, and who have been steadying influences of priceless value amidst the unrest which has been regrettably prevalent among some of our members, causing some to suffer from doubt and indecision and a few to resign their membership. I ask for your patience and for a generous interpretation of my efforts as I strive to find the path of wisdom. I know these two great elder brethren will give their help. Yet the responsibility will be mine, for the time will come when you will rightly call upon me to render to you an account of the trust you have reposed in me.

To those who did not vote for me, may I be permitted to say that I think I understand

and appreciate their reasons ? Inevitably must there be both misgiving and mistrust among many earnest and devoted members of the Theosophical Society as it enters a new phase of its existence. The future must needs seem uncertain. It may appear that the immemorial landmarks and policies of the Society are in danger of oblivion. One or another of the potential Presidents may seem, to judge by his record and by his pronouncements, to fall lamentably short of those standards upon the maintenance of which the well-being of our movement depends.

I would, however, point out that while it is one thing to be a private member of the Society, with all the freedom and comparative lack of special responsibility each member rightly enjoys, it is quite another thing to be its chief official, whose every word and action must needs be weighed in innumerable Theosophical balances using all sorts and conditions of weights, and whom the outer world will of course use as an acid test for the judgment it passes upon our Theosophical Society. I have been elected neither to gain pre-eminence for any specific interpretation of Theosophy, nor

to incline the Society as such along some specialized road, still less to further any supposed Theosophical proclivities of my own. I am elected to be all that the President of the Theosophical Society should be, and I am rightly expected to turn down the old leaf of my private membership, turn over the new leaf of my public membership, and radically adjust myself to those changes which the turning over of a new leaf demands. This does not mean, of course, that I am required to abandon my individual freedom, but rather to ensure its due and emphatic subordination to the interests of the Society as a whole.

To make my position quite clear, I would refer you to an address delivered by Dr. Besant at the Theosophical World Congress at Chicago in 1929 and subsequently published as a leaflet under the title *The Open Door*. I am of opinion that any other attitude than that set forth in this address would gravely compromise both the essential neutrality of the Society and the no less essential freedom of the individual member.

What have you the right to expect, perhaps the duty to expect, from your President ?

First, that he will keep wide open the doors of the Theosophical Society to all who accept the principle of Brotherhood in the terms of the First Object, and who are prepared to do their best to live it. The Society is in no way concerned with the beliefs or opinions of those who seek membership, any more than it is concerned with the beliefs and opinions of those who are already members. These, whether private or public, are their own affair exclusively. But the Society is surely concerned that each member shall be a source of goodwill, understanding and solidarity, and not a source of constant discord. In the interests of its own self-preservation the Society has the duty to expect that members will so live that all outer differences of belief and opinion and mode of living, which naturally and rightly separate them, shall tend to strengthen and not to weaken the inner and indissoluble tie of the One Life which all share, and which is the very heart itself both of Theosophy and of the Theosophical Society. May I, in this connection, venture to suggest that in " The Golden Stairs " of H. P. Blavatsky we have a perfect description of that

solidarity amidst difference which members of the Society should ever seek to maintain?

Second, that he will faithfully guard the Society against its dominance by, or subordination to, any dogma, doctrine or belief held by any individual member or group of members, and constantly to ensure that the Society and its various official expressions and activities shall be kept clearly and emphatically dissociate from all such beliefs and opinions and from any movements which embody them.

Third, that he will stress the paramount importance, both for the Society as a whole, for each Section, and for every Lodge, of spreading far and wide the great science of life given to the world in the beginning of the final quarter of the last century by the Masters of the Wisdom through Their Messenger, H. P. Blavatsky, and those who succeeded her.

Fourth, that he will actively encourage through the Theosophical Order of Service and in other suitable ways the practical application, by members and groups of members, of this science of life to the needs of the world in all its various departments.

Fifth, that he will encourage in all possible ways the youth of the world to perceive in Theosophy a high road to Truth, to Freedom and to Happiness.

Sixth, that he will constantly remind members of the Society of two great principles in their relation to Theosophy: first, that Theosophy is a body of truth for study, investigation and experiment, and that every member has the right, and indeed the duty, to pursue such study, investigation and experiment in the utmost freedom, no matter whither these may lead him, just as he has the duty to accord the same right to his fellow-members in a spirit of sincere goodwill and understanding; second, that there is no effective search for truth save as truth becomes the actual possession of its seeker through his own personal experience. The authority of another may help him on his way, may be a sign-post pointing to him a short cut. Heart-felt belief may help him on his way, as may also keen intellectual appreciation. Yet neither authority, nor belief, nor intellectual appreciation are enough—they are but means to the end. Truth is a matter for individual

experience. We must know for ourselves. Membership of the Theosophical Society may help to point the way to experience. Theosophy, its literature, its exponents may help to point the way to the realization of truth. But each one of us must in the long run tread his own way, even though he may be able to profit from much external assistance as he treads it.

Seventh, that he himself will personally strive so to try to live and to work, so to conduct the business of the Society, that our movement steadily increases in honour and dignity and earns respectful consideration from the outer world.

To all these duties I pledge myself, but I know full well that the fulfilment of this pledge depends upon the generous co-operation of you all, upon the sincerity of my own eagerness, and most of all upon the gracious help I pray I may grow worthy to receive from Those who brought our Society into existence, and under whose watchful care it lives.

Never must belief in Them become a condition of membership of Their Society. Never

must belief in Them cause any to set themselves apart from others, who do not so believe, in fancied superiority of spiritual stature. Never must Their names be used, or any supposed association with Them be invoked, in order to stimulate any form of blind acquiescence, no matter for what purpose. Nevertheless, these Elder Brethren, the original Founders of the Theosophical Society, are indeed its heart and its life; and only as we deliberately include within the all-embracing circle of brotherhood not only those who come after us on the path of evolution, but also, in all reverence, Those who have gone before us and beckon us to follow after Them, do we make that circle complete, and thus give full and unbroken reality to our First Object.

Therefore, at this great moment of assuming the office of President I ask for your kindly generosity and for Their gracious blessing. For my own part, I offer a very eager and heartfelt devotion to the splendid Cause which unites us in comradeship, in seeking and in service. May our motto be: TOGETHER, THOUGH DIFFERENTLY!

II

Letter to the General Public

I make bold to presume that the Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, now with Sections in 48 countries throughout the world and numbering well over 30,000 members speaking all the principal languages and belonging to every great Faith and some to no Faith at all, may be regarded as a by no means negligible influence in world affairs, and as an international body the policies and principles of which will therefore have a certain public interest.

On assuming, therefore, the office of President, in the vacancy caused by the deeply regretted death of Dr. Annie Besant, by the votes of a large majority of the members of the Society, I feel I am justified in calling attention to these policies and principles—splendidly set forth as they have been for close on sixty years by three successive world-figures in Madame H. P. Blavatsky, Colonel H. S. Olcott and Dr. Annie Besant.

For what does the Theosophical Society stand ?

It stands for three specific principles :

First, for the recognition of the truth that the brotherhood of life is universal and all-inclusive, be the differences in form or in growth what they may, and for the putting of such recognition into increasingly effective practice.

Second, for the free search for truth irrespective of all inhibitions imposed by conventional dogmas, doctrines and orthodoxies, and specifically to seek truth in the great religions of the world, so as to help to restore to these their essential function of unifying and not of disintegrating, into which error the ignorance of man has led them.

Third, for adventuring forth into the unknown to seek and find Truth in hitherto unexplored regions of consciousness.

Thus, the Theosophical Society stands for a positive goodwill irrespective of all outer differences, be these of faith, or race, or nationality, or custom, or opinion : for an ardour for Truth breaking asunder its many imprisonments and distortions born of man's

ignorance: for a spirit of venturesomeness into the unknown so that Truth may grow from more to more.

The greater leaders of the Theosophical Society have ever been breakers of bondages and heralds of freedom, not in the name of the Theosophical Society, for the Society's principle of all-inclusive brotherhood does not permit it to be committed to any specific interpretation of brotherhood, or to any specific activity in the name of brotherhood. But they worked and fought as Theosophists, and under the inspiration of Theosophy. H. P. Blavatsky helped to break the bondages of materialism, both in science and in religion, and in her masterpiece, *The Secret Doctrine*, lifted the whole conception of life out of a narrow anthropomorphism into a wondrous Plan of spiritual unfoldment moving forward to unimaginable heights of glory. Colonel Olcott stressed the practical application of the vistas disclosed by his great colleague, and specifically aroused the then lethargic Buddhist Faith into new life and self-respect. Dr. Annie Besant brought the light of her own great spiritual experience to bear upon the work of

H. P. Blavatsky, and focussed the fruits in a very remarkable series of books and pamphlets. Furthermore, she applied her individual realization of Theosophy to the enfranchisement of life in many departments—in religion, in education, in politics, in social life, compelling the respectful attention of the world by her ceaseless devotion, her insight and her fearlessness. Dr. Besant, like H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, has left upon her generation the imperishable mark of the influence of a great Theosophist. And no less a mark has been left upon the world by her colleague, C. W. Leadbeater—one of those rare personages who from time to time cause the light of hidden Truth to shine amidst the almost impenetrable darkness of human blindness, generally to their own relentless persecution and intolerant rejection on the part of those who have neither the ears to hear nor the eyes to see.

Any student of the achievements of members of the Theosophical Society during the past sixty years, and of the influence of the science of Theosophy upon the world during the same period, is bound to concede that

Theosophy, the Theosophical Society, and many of its members, have made a lasting impression upon modern thought and movements. Because of these the world is different, the world has grown, the world has become more free.

What then is the work of Theosophists and of the Theosophical Society in the world of to-day and of the immediate future? To continue to spread the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky and her pupils, more, I venture to assert, in terms of their soul and spirit than in their literal presentation. H. P. Blavatsky would have been the last person to expect any rigid subservience to the letter of her pronouncements. She would have been horrified to think that after her death she would become to some a dogma, a creed. an acid test of Theosophical orthodoxy, and that her books would be regarded as ultimate and final revelations, as bibles, to doubt which is nothing short of heresy and little short of blasphemy. She gave as she heard from Those wiser than herself, and as she knew from her own experience. And she asked no more than that her statements should be examined with an open and unprejudiced

mind, and be treated as marks on the chart of the mighty ocean of life for the guidance of those who are eager to venture forth upon it.

A great master-mariner was H. P. Blavatsky, to be heard with deep respect by all younger mariners. Her writings indeed constitute the heart of Theosophy as it exists in the outer world to-day. But other master-mariners are there who also have voyaged the ocean of life, and whose charts most helpfully supplement and elucidate that of the pioneer voyager herself.

Now what do these teachings tell us ? What marks does Theosophy make upon the chart of life ?

1. That all life is essentially one and universal, be its forms of manifestation what they may.

2. That the whole of life is within a great evolutionary process whereby an infinite number and variety of life-units move from lowliest unconsciousness, through innumerable stages of unfoldment, to heights of self-consciousness of ever-increasing splendour.

3. That this movement is ceaseless and irresistible, under beneficent and immutable law, order and purpose.

4. That world and individual circumstances, prosperity and depression, war and peace, pleasure and pain, joy and suffering, health and disease, good fortune and ill fortune—all are signs of the evolutionary process at work under such beneficent and immutable law, order and purpose.

5. That each life-unit has the freedom to hasten or to retard the movement of its own evolutionary process: to hasten it by understanding and fulfilling the law, to retard it by ignorance and by seeking to evade the law.

In the greater Theosophical literature these fundamental principles are treated in all detail, so that the struggles of life, the frustrations of life, the inexplicabilities of life, the seeming injustices of life, the apparent aimlessness and futility of life, become intelligible, reasonable, purposeful. Life becomes a great adventure. Life becomes worth while. Life becomes wonderful even in its drabness, its darkness, its apparent agonies and despairs.

Surely, then, Theosophists and the Theosophical Society must spread this precious key to life far and wide; for the whole world, and every individual in it, is face to face with

problems, is hedged about with problems, and seeks so vainly for the way out. And there are two ways of spreading Theosophy—by demonstrating in personal daily life the practical efficacy of Theosophy, the way of example; by sending forth the Truths of Theosophy garbed in forms congenial to those who are desired to hear, the way of precept.

Theosophy is an expression of Truth Universal. It has no exclusive appeal. It belongs alike to the votaries of the various religions and no less to atheists and agnostics. It has a message for the scientist, for the philosopher, for the statesman, for the artist and musician, for the worker, for the capitalist, for the priest, for the teacher, for youth, for age. And very specially has it hope for the hopeless, comfort for the afflicted, strength for the weak. Theosophy has inspiration and delight for every individual, no matter whether he be young or old. And to the young is offered a Theosophy and a movement which will help them to express their youth more happily because more wisely.

The Theosophical Society offers to the meditative a Theosophy which will help to

make their contemplations deeper and more valuable. It offers to the active, largely through the Theosophical Order of Service, a Theosophy which will help to make their activity more purposeful and vital. It offers to the devotee of a Religion, of a Cause, or of a Person, a Theosophy which will help to make his faith more real and glorious. It offers to the worker a Theosophy which will help to give him a sense of the noble worth of his work, and to the capitalist a Theosophy which will help to give him a sense of the magnificent power and sacredness of his wealth. It offers to the artist a Theosophy which will help him to ascend into ever-increasing heights of artistic creativeness and insight. It offers to the statesman and to the politician a Theosophy which will help him to realize the fundamental nature of polity and the essential principles governing all true statecraft and political activity. It offers to the teacher a Theosophy which will help him to realize what education really is and the whence, how and whither of him who is educated. It offers to the scientist a Theosophy which will help him to realize the nature of that real and eternal science whereby the

worlds are formed and are ever nourished and sustained.

And while Theosophy thus meets to serve all on the many different roads on which they travel, yet is it but one Theosophy, just as the different roads themselves converge upon one goal.

Is it not, then, worth your while to study this Theosophy for which, perhaps, so much seems to be claimed, yet which has brought happiness, peace, purpose, to countless thousands throughout the world? And will you approach it without prejudice, without preconception derived from gossip or possible misrepresentation in books and addresses? Theosophy comes to meet you in no spirit of dogma, or of doctrine, or of creed, not as some other religion or philosophy or science, not as a setting forth of the imaginative vagaries of Blavatsky or Besant or Leadbeater; but as an age-old science of life rich in detailed application to life's circumstances and, if approached with a mind not cribbed, cabined or confined by the orthodoxies and conventionalities of the present age, almost uncannily effective in its simple method of rendering

the unintelligible clear and the apparently useless clearly purposeful. It exchanges old values for new, and thus makes life infinitely worth living.

Theosophy asks you to examine, to study. It does not ask you to believe or to accept on authority. But it does ask you not to make up your mind in a hurry, nor to assume that that which your mind does not conceive nor understand cannot therefore be true. And it also asks you to make up your mind for yourself, not to allow it to be made up for you by somebody else, still less by public opinion. Theosophy asks for fair play, for then it will be able, in all probability, to give you wonderful measure in return—by changing the whole of your life for the better and for the happier.

C. JINARĀJADĀSA

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF C. JINARĀJADĀSA, PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

February 17, 1946

MY BROTHERS:

Will you rise while I repeat the Invocation to the Great Ones made by Dr. Besant at the opening of Conventions:

May Those, who are the embodiment of Love Immortal, bless with Their protection the Society established to do Their Will on earth; may They ever guard it by Their Power, inspire it with Their Wisdom and energize it with Their Activity.

My Brothers:

I ask you to repeat in unison the "Golden Stairs," transmitted to us by H. P. B. from a Master of the Wisdom:

A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for all, a readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the Sacred Science depicts—these are the Golden Stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb to the Temple of Divine Wisdom.

Be seated.

The Theosophical Society, beginning with a small nucleus in 1875 in New York of 16 interested persons, is today a world-wide organization. Up to the outbreak of the war, the International Society was composed of 48 National Societies each with its own administration. Expositions of Theosophy were being given, here in India in ten languages, and in other parts of the world in twenty more. What binds us, of nearly all races and creeds, is an

abiding eagerness to understand every aspect of Truth, religious, scientific, philosophic and artistic, in order that, growing nobler in character, we may take part in the affairs of men so as to diminish little by little the sum total of human misery, ignorance and cruelty. We have been led in this task during the last seventy years by three Presidents of the Society, Henry Steel Olcott, Annie Besant and George Sydney Arundale. It is my duty, now, at your command, to lead you.

If Theosophy were a cut and dried philosophy statable in books and teachings, or originated by Teachers whom none must challenge, the Society would not have grown to be world-wide as it is today. Theosophy the Divine Wisdom as we possess it today is only that small body of Truth which underlies the everchanging facts, not only of our globe and of our Humanity, but of the whole Cosmos; we cannot by any imagination conceive of even the greatest of Adepts knowing the complete Divine Wisdom which explains every problem of this vast Universe of a million million solar systems. But we have already received a part of the Wisdom from Adept Teachers in the

past; they have given us the religions and the philosophies; we have yet to receive more, and how much more, what mind can say? We are receiving today new fragments of the Wisdom in what Science is discovering in every field of investigation; here and there we gain glimpses also in the creations of the great poets and artists of the world. We Theosophists possess to commence with a body of truths known as Theosophy; our greatest adventure in life is to discover more of Truth, for "There is no religion higher than Truth." And we hope to discover more, not for ourselves, but in order "to lift a little of the heavy Karma of the world".

In this search for Truth, there is none first and none last; all are equal and brothers, and the discoveries of all are needed for the full integration of Truth. It is because of that fact that I, as an individual Theosophist though President of the Society, can address you at this inaugural meeting, and outline to you along what lines I hope to discover with your aid new aspects of Theosophy, and how, with what we already know, and with what we shall know as the years pass, we can work together

towards a fuller realization of our First Object, "To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour." We have already done much towards that realization; in some ways perhaps we are the only organization that has so far succeeded. But we need only look at the chaotic social and economic conditions of the world today, and the spirit of war inherent in them, to realize how much harder we all need to work in order to make Brotherhood a "living power" in our lives and in that of others.

In order to make the world better we have to understand the causes of its miseries. These were analysed for us in 1881 by one of the greatest of the Adepts who is known by the title of Mahā-Chohan. In a communication which He then sent to a leading Theosophist, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, the author of *The Occult World*, the Adept first pointed to contrasted conditions then existing, which still exist today. They are first, blind, ignorant religious superstition among the millions everywhere, who hope with prayers and offerings to escape the consequences of their sinning by propitiations of deities great and small; and secondly

as its opposite, Materialism in all its forms, preaching the doctrine that man is only the body that perisheth, with no surviving consciousness whatsoever. These two manifestations of the human mind, exploited on the one side by priests of religion threatening the masses with divine wrath and especially with an eternal damnation hereafter, and on the other by the priests of science wiping out of human affairs all landmarks of morality and proclaiming in brief, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow ye die," have, says the Adept, created a situation where the struggle for existence has become keener than ever for all. There is a furious rush to crowd into one lifetime all that man craves of happiness; this is especially the case with the sceptical intellectual classes of the West.

Francis Bacon, the Father of modern science, once dreamed that the future of science is "to endow the condition and life of man with new powers or works", and "to extend more widely the limits of the power and greatness of man". It is stupefying to contemplate how, instead, the achievements of science which have enabled industry to provide

for us ever new commodities and conveniences, have also year by year, as science has advanced, made the struggle for life more fratricidal. The strife between man and man, even for mere subsistence, is keener today than it was a century ago ; more millions are being exploited today by capital through the power created for it by science.

Now, those of us who have witnessed the devastation of two great world wars, and all of us who see what may be in store for humanity with the release of atomic power, realize that mankind's troubles are more deep-seated than ever. And we have to witness the tragic fact that the great religions, once a source of inspiration for all human problems, have failed mankind in this crisis. Religion has " by-passed " humanity, or if you will, humanity has " by-passed " religion.

It is in this situation that we Theosophists have a vital role to play : that role is no less a task than to diminish the intensity of struggle for all mankind. How is this superhuman task to be achieved ?

This work is to be done by us by resuscitating in the religions a divine Truth as to man

and God that has been so overlaid by the dust of ages as to be completely forgotten as a living factor in daily religious thought and conduct. We know that divine Truth well here in India in the proclamation of the sages that God and man are one, not two. *Tat tvam asi*, "THAT art thou," is still found written in the scriptures; but it is trampled underfoot by the human institutions which Hindu religion has created and sustained. What more ghastly denial of "THAT art thou" could there be than the treatment meted out throughout the ages to the outcaste Depressed Classes, now termed Harijans, the "children of God"? Changing the label has not changed the desecration of a divine Truth.

This same truth that God and man are one exists in some other religions also, but mostly as an esoteric doctrine. Said Jesus Christ, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye, in Me, and I in you." Said His greatest disciple, St. Paul, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Traditions of this wonderful revelation, that there is no eternal chasm

between the nature of God and the nature of man, are found everywhere.

Thus in Buddhism also, as it is understood in Tibet, China and Japan, the same mystic truth is proclaimed. The teaching is given to all, that in each human being exists a Bodhisattva Principle, so that each who desires to tread the Way of the Buddhas, necessitating heroic efforts life after life for hundreds of lives, in order to teach mankind the Great Law, can achieve the stupendous height of being a Tathāgata, a Saviour of mankind, for Bodhi, Supreme Wisdom and Compassion, is at the root of his being.

It is by basing our work on this truth, the eternal Rock of Ages, that we Theosophists can help mankind. If I have the nature of God within me, if somewhere in the recesses of my heart and mind, I can see a Divine Light shining within me, and not external to me as when I am engaged in religious worship under the guidance of priestly leaders and teachers, then it follows that Divine *Happiness* also resides within me, I am then not only "the Way, the Truth and the Life", I am also the fount of Happiness. Convince men that

the fount of Happiness is within themselves, then little by little the struggle for life diminishes. What does it matter that I am poor, that I am ailing, that I am oppressed, if I have within me the key to open the Treasure House of Happiness? In daily life, then, it is not what I earn that matters, not what I own which is the standard of worth; but what I am as pure and unsullied by greed, as charitable in heart and mind to all, as radiating friendship to bird, beast, tree, shrub and flower.

It is not an easy task to discover, in the words of St. Paul, "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory". It is to this task we are called. Divine Truth, Divine Beauty, Divine Tenderness, and every factor of hope and glory that is conveyed by the one word Mukti, or Nirvana, or Salvation, all these reside in ourselves. Could only men be aware of them, the search for their realization will be found as the only way to Happiness. We Theosophists have to instruct mankind as to this new way. It was said in China: "If you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily." To possess a second loaf is only greed; but to contemplate the beauty

of a lily is to realise that the lily's beauty, as all other forms of beauty, are in myself too. It was said in Japan, when one's life is so utterly desperate—as sometimes it was when your feudal lord ordered you to commit hara-kiri —or as sometimes when the course of true love for two lovers is crossed by fate, and suicide seems the only way out of undiminishable misery, then, said the Japanese sage, "Do not weep; you are but reaping the Karma of evil deeds of a past life; but make a *graceful* exit; create out of your tragedy an exquisite poem, and leave it on the bank before you drown yourself; perform your hara-kiri in the midst of friends to the music of doleful chants, and in a ceremony that has dignity." You see the main theme in these strange doctrines of China and Japan: it is not outward circumstances that matter, but one's reaction to them.

I do not want to give the impression that I would advise anyone to commit suicide to escape from his troubles. An understanding of the facts concerning life after death shows that to commit suicide is to "fly out of the frying pan into the fire", for however keen is the suffering while alive, yet it is to some

extent deadened by the physical brain. When free of that brain which offers a resistance to the acuteness of suffering, he who commits suicide feels far more keenly the edge of his sufferings. I have quoted the advice of the Japanese sage only to illustrate the point that life must be *creative* of truth and beauty, not only when we are happy, but also when we are in the profoundest misery.

To create intense happiness from within our souls, such a happiness as will compensate us for the hardships of life—that is the lesson that we Theosophists have to learn, and to *teach*. The magic phrase, "Open Sesame," lies in that one word, *Create*. Even a child knows its secret; see how busy he is with his mud or sand, or the puddle in the gutter; we say he is playing. No, he is creating; he is reaching out into the recesses of being, and rejoicing that he can *do* something that gives him joy. So too, we can all learn to create. Every poet creates, for the word means one who fashions; every artist is as a crucible into which is poured the mingled dross of life's transient happinesses and miseries, and he melts and transmutes them in the fire of his

imagination, and bodies forth a work of art that is for a while not alone his own Mukti or Salvation, but makes young men see visions and old men dream dreams of their eternal joy and salvation.

It was said by Solomon about the Wisdom, "Sweetly doth she *order* all things." Wisdom is a power. It is for this reason that Theosophy is not an intellectual philosophy, but a generating station of power. Each Theosophical Lodge should become a power-plant generating ideas, especially the ideas which the world needs today to lessen the struggle for existence. Take, for instance, the most powerful and dynamic idea which we Theosophists have as our "marching orders"—the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. Only imagine a world peopled in the majority with men and women who not only believe but have discovered the joys inherent in that principle; would a man or woman then care to ask to what race another belongs, to what God he or she bends the knee? The one joyous truth which the stranger brings with him is then; "You are my brother, I am your brother." How could wars ever arise in such

a civilisation? How could poverty exist as contrasted with callous luxury? These human evils, the source of the struggle for existence, disappear, as the morning mists disappear with the rising of the sun.

Suppose in addition, every Theosophist in every Theosophical Lodge were to say softly to himself as he meets friend or stranger, "THAT art thou, the Vision of God that I seek, the goal of Mukti which I long for, art *thou*." All our Theosophical studies then are a mere accompaniment, an elaboration in harmonies, of the glorious chant of Unity which rings throughout the universe, linking angel and man, beast and plant, in one joyous embrace.

Imagine too Theosophical Lodges not only studying the Wisdom in books, but also trying to express what they know in poems and songs; holding study classes not to study "teachings," but to teach the newcomer the art of creating out of the experiences which he has had in life some glimpses of truth about his own Divine Self, and too about the nature of those Fragments of that Divine Self who are the men, the women, and the children

around him. The word Theosophist then undergoes a change; it signifies not one who belongs to a Society, but one who has learnt how, as did once upon a time the sages in India, to create new hymns of new Vedas, in singing which the world of the Angels joins with the world of men; to create statues as did Phidias and Praxiteles in Greece, to contemplate which gave the utmost solace to every troubled heart; to paint pictures as did Turner, showing in the colours of the sky the light that never is on land or sea; to create dances, in looking at which we gain a far away glimpse of the Cosmic Rhythm in which all creation moves.

Think too of the Theosophist as one who notes the outline and tint of every leaf, of every feather, marvelling at the transcendent workmanship of the Demiurgos, the Divine Artificer; as one who gazes at each flower as a window into another Land where exist for him adventure after adventure in love and life; think of him supremely as one who looks at the faces of children, each as a sentence with a new message that Goodness, Truth and Beauty are one, and that though God when

embodied as man or woman is dazzling in beauty, there is another order of Divine Beauty to dazzle the heart and mind in a child's face.

My Brothers, helped by the Teachers and their teachings of the past, we must create new Wisdoms, new Theosophies, so that we are known not as the professors of a creed, not as the followers of teachers, but as men and women busy, strenuously, but also with the sense of joy, creating new ways of happiness for mankind. Then shall men little by little discover that the Kingdom of Righteousness, the Garden of Happiness, are within their own hearts and minds ; then will they cease to clamber and struggle for outer delights ; for how then should a man delve into the depths of the earth to find jewels, when in his own hand is the key to the Treasure House of all jewels possible ?

It is in these new ways that we who are pledged to the work of the Theosophical Society must work " to lift a little of the heavy Karma of the world ". Each of us bears a torch to show the path to Happiness for others.

A time will come, though you and I will see it only in our next incarnation, when the

curses called competition and the struggle for life, which dog the footsteps of mankind today, will have been as evil dreams of the night. You and I are working to create that new day's light and that happiness for all, when there shall be no distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour; when men know and rejoice in the only supreme fact of their immortal life as Souls, as gravity is the supreme fact of their earthly bodies, that Happiness is within themselves, that the Way to Salvation starts from their own hearts, and that they need no temple or priest or book to show them the road. For they will have discovered that the Way, the Truth, the Life and the Joy are inseparable from the essential nature of every man, woman and child.

My Brothers, we shall succeed in our stupendous task. We shall achieve our dream. For we work, but ***not alone.*** With us stand the Great Saviours of the World who have gone before us. Their Blessing is with us Their Strength will uphold us, as, in Their name and for the love of mankind, we go forth into the world to lessen the load of human misery.

Date Due

SEP 2 3 1990			
APR 3 0 [illegible]			
5-31-01			
DEC 0 1 2004			
APR 2 0 [illegible]			
DEC 0 6 2017			

T
01 1
IA

20560

T
01 1
IA

3178 20560

Olcott, H. S. et al

Inaugural Addresses of Four Presidents of the Theosophica Society

Th
OL-1-o

20560